



Assessing Safety When Making Finding 3A

Finding 3A: *Has DHS ensured that appropriate services are in place to safeguard the child's safety, health and well-being?*

1. Are certain cases more vulnerable to safety concerns?

Yes! These include:

- Children in group homes or Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS) placements,
- Children who have extreme behaviors and/or mental health issues,
- Children with multiple placements,
- Children placed in care under a voluntary agreement,
- Children who are nonverbal or lack assertiveness,
- Cases with missed face-to-face contacts,
- Cases where no child or parent attends the CRB review, and
- Cases where only the caseworker is present at the review.

2. How can I assess safety during a CRB review?

- ✓ Verify face-to-face contact with the child is occurring monthly, and that it is in the foster home every other month.
- ✓ If the child is at the review, ask the child...
 - Can you tell us a little bit about where you live?
 - Is the Foster Children's Bill of Rights posted in your home somewhere?
 - Is there an adult you can talk to that you trust?
- ✓ If the child is 14 years or older and not at the review, try to find out why.
- ✓ Ask the caseworker...
 - What did you observe the last time you were in the foster home?
 - Ask follow-up questions if you are not provided sufficient detail about the home and interactions between the child and others in the home.
- ✓ Specifically ask the parents, child's attorney, and court appointed special advocate...
 - Do you have any concerns about the foster home?
- ✓ Ask if anyone else has anything to add about the placement.

3. What should I do if there is a safety concern?

- ✓ Make appropriate findings! If the child is not safe, DHS has not ensured that appropriate services are in place to safeguard the child's safety, health and well-being. This is true even if the caseworker has exhausted current available resources trying to find a safe placement. If applicable, you can specify in the findings that this is a resource issue, not a case work issue.
- ✓ Honor concerns expressed by parents. You can do this by asking follow-up questions to others at the review and telling the Field Manager to detail the parent's concerns in the Findings and Recommendations. You should do this even if the board doubts the validity of the concerns and makes a positive finding.
- ✓ Make recommendations that address the safety concern.

4. Our board is still really concerned about a child and feels the need to do more. What should we do?

Talk to your Field Manager about additional options that are available. Those may include:

- Forwarding the CRB Findings and Recommendations to the DHS Program Manager,
- Requesting an early court review,
- Requesting an early CRB review,
- Asking the Field Manager to staff the case with other Field Managers for ideas,
- Writing a letter from the board to DHS, and
- Notifying the CRB Director.

A word of caution...

Overuse of the additional options in #4 can cause them to be less effective over time. Make sure to use them sparingly.